

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Summary of Committee Member Budget Comments At March 1, 2011 Meeting

General Comments & Questions

- Education Budget Target and Guidance from Full Chairs
 - Need information on how to divide the Target between the three systems.
 - How can enrollment increases and building reserves be funded within the target?
 - Will there be a continuation review?
- How Staff Present Information
 - When staff discuss reduction options, make sure to show the total budget for that particular program or line item (not just the amount of the reduction)
 - Provide program budget information, with description of what each program does.
- Additional Information Requested
 - Want to look more into the base budgets for each system.
 - If there are programs that academic (peer-reviewed) studies have shown ineffective, would like the committee to hear about it.
 - Have seen K-12 teacher turnover, but not turnover for universities, community colleges, or K-12 Teacher Assistants. Would be helpful to know typical turnover.
 - How many nonprofits are funded in the Education budget?
 - Want to look at block granting at all three levels, and potential associated staff reductions.
- Cautions Regarding Budget Cuts
 - Don't cut to the extent that we cause our educational facilities to be ineffective in certain programs
 - Look at how the cuts may affect accreditation.

Public Schools

- Cautions Regarding Budget Cuts
 - When making cuts to positions like social workers, guidance counselors, safety personnel, testing coordinators etc. need to look at recommended staffing ratios.
 - Be mindful of complying with federal regulations while cutting, particularly with regards to keeping a student in the least restrictive setting.
- Teacher Performance and Effectiveness
 - Review national teacher certification and what it does to the classroom.
 - Need to consider the performance of teachers and keep our best.
 - Need to look at Teacher Assistants' effectiveness; how does it compare in grades K-1 versus grades 3-4.
- Specific Revenue Sources
 - Will the subcommittee have input into how Lottery funds are allocated?
 - The Federal government has granted other states flexibility regarding Exceptional Children (EC) money; could North Carolina get the same?
- Paperwork, Reporting and Regulations
 - Need to keep in mind the paperwork we will be adding (or taking away) from the teachers.
 - Encourage subcommittee to ask for specifics when they hear complaints concerning paperwork and regulations.
 - Look at list from NC School Boards Association of requirements to consider for elimination. List will be distributed to committee and staff.
- Additional Information Requested
 - The committee needs to hear the results of Public Schools Funding Formula study.
 - Regarding the Fiscal Research staff presentation from February 16th, Slide 4, would like the same information broken down at the supervisory level.
 - In the public school arena, need to have a sense of constitutional limits.
 - In high school curriculum, have heard that North Carolina offers over 500 courses. Is that true, and how much does it cost to make these courses available?

- How are class size requirements implemented in the schools? Particularly, how are maximums implemented?
- Have heard that different LEAs/high schools require different credit hours for graduation. Is this true, and what are the different requirements?
- Handheld devices: have heard that it takes 1-2 hours per student to input data. Is this true; and if so, is this more of a hindrance than a help?
- Do any studies examine the cost-effectiveness of half-days in the school system?
- Look at how much various tests cost the State and how effective those tests are.

Community Colleges

- Have heard that the Community College System requires over 400 annual reports; is this true and if so, which can be eliminated?

University System

- Provide information about funding of Centers and Institutes. For each, show how much was cut in the last 2 years. Of what's remaining, how much is Federal match?
- When enrollment growth is funded, want to see how the universities perform (e.g., graduation rates, freshman retention rates).
- Need to look at graduation and retention rates of North Carolina Private Colleges and Universities and compare to UNC rates.